



# Factsheet

## E-Cycle Wisconsin: Collector FAQs

Wisconsin's electronics recycling law, 2009 Act 50, establishes a statewide program called E-Cycle Wisconsin to collect and recycle certain electronic devices. It is based on a product stewardship approach, which assigns primary responsibility for collection and recycling to the manufacturer. The law also bans certain electronics from Wisconsin landfills and incinerators after Sept. 1, 2010.

### What is a registered collector?

An E-Cycle Wisconsin registered collector receives eligible electronic devices (EEDs) from households or covered schools and delivers or arranges for the delivery of the electronics to a registered recycler. Collectors may maintain a permanent drop-off site, host one or more collection events, or run a mail-back program.

There are no restrictions on who may be a collector. Recyclers, local governments, retailers, nonprofits, haulers, manufacturers, etc. may choose to be collectors.

### If I collect electronics, do I have to be a registered collector?

Existing collection efforts **do not** have to be part of this program. If you are collecting electronics on a small scale in order to recover metal, or primarily collecting from businesses or governments, we recommend that you do not become part of E-Cycle Wisconsin.

Collectors must register and participate in E-Cycle Wisconsin if what you collect will count toward what manufacturers need to recycle in Wisconsin each year. If you are a registered collector, you **must** work with a registered E-Cycle Wisconsin recycler.

### What is the advantage of being a registered collector?

Under E-Cycle Wisconsin, manufacturers must pay for the collection and processing of a certain amount of electronics each year. This means that if you collect eligible electronics, you should have very low costs as a collector.

You can set up an agreement with a registered recycler to send the recycler a certain amount of electronics each year at a guaranteed price and with the level of service you need (such as having collection bins provided and picked up).

For the eligible electronics, you should expect to pay at most a small fee for services the recycler is providing or a small per-pound charge for electronics that are more expensive to recycle, like TVs.

We recommend that you talk with multiple registered recyclers to make sure you find one that meets your needs.

### As a local government, do I need to become a collector?

No. The law does not require recycling responsible units (RUs) or other local governments to collect electronics.

We recommend you consider the following when deciding whether to be a collector:

- Are you receiving requests from residents to collect electronics, or do your residents have few recycling options? The DNR maintains a list of collection sites by county at <http://dnr.wi.gov/ecyclewisconsin>.
- Are there other governments or private collectors you could work with? You could partner on collections or offer space on government property for another collector to hold an event.
- Do you have staff or volunteer time to properly manage a permanent collection site or hold a collection event?

#### Local government assistance

In addition to contacting E-Cycle Wisconsin staff, local governments can talk with Joe Van Rossum of the UW-Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center about their options. Contact Joe at (608) 262-0936 or [vanrossum@epd.engr.wisc.edu](mailto:vanrossum@epd.engr.wisc.edu).



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### What are the requirements for registered collectors?

- Register and report annually.
- Work with a registered E-Cycle Wisconsin recycler.
- May charge a fee, but goal is to reduce these as much as possible.
- Maintain records on EEDs collected under the program separately from records of other collection activities.
- Report **weights of EEDs** collected under the program and **recyclers** they were sent to.
- Report **where EEDs collected**—locations of collection events and permanent sites.
- Cannot use prison labor for collection (Huber/community service OK).
- Comply with all state and federal health and environmental safety requirements—safe storage, handling, etc.

More information and registration form:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/ecyclewisconsin>

### Do I have to accept electronics from everyone?

No. While you cannot discriminate and we encourage collectors to accept electronics from any individual or school, you can place restrictions on your collection.

For example, you may limit the use of your collection site to residents of a certain geographic area or to customers. If your town has a drop-off site, you can continue to only allow town residents to use it. If you have an electronics store, you can offer recycling to customers but not to non-customers.

You may also restrict the number of electronics people can bring to your collection site or event at one time.

### Do I have to be on the DNR's list of collection sites?

Yes. If you're a registered collector, your collection sites need to be on our public list. If you are worried about getting too many electronics, you can put in place restrictions like those described above. If you are not

comfortable being listed as a collection site, you should not be part of the program.

### What should registered collectors charge?

Collectors do not need to charge for collection. However, local governments in particular should calculate their anticipated costs of serving as a collector and determine what, if any, fee is needed to cover their costs.

Because recycling costs should normally be covered under the collector's contract with a recycler, collection costs should be minimal. One of the goals for E-Cycle Wisconsin is to make it easier and cheaper for Wisconsin residents to properly recycle their electronics.

### What should a collector look for when selecting a recycler?

Be sure the recycler offers the services you need. For example, if you have limited storage space, be sure the recycler can pick up the electronics on a regular basis. If the recycler is providing you with containers, make sure they meet the needs of your site in terms of size and material, and that you have the means to load the containers into a truck for hauling.

While all registered recyclers must meet minimum standards, do your own homework to make sure you're comfortable with their environmental and safety record and that they have all required licenses and permits.

Make sure the recycler can account for where materials are going and verify that they are being recycled in a responsible manner, including proper handling of personal data stored on computers and other devices.

The following certifications, though not required, can give you a higher level of confidence in your recycler: E-Stewards, R2 or other independently audited certification program. DNR includes information about certifications on its list of registered recyclers.

Shop around. The best way to compare services and environmental management practices is by talking with several registered recyclers.

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### More information about E-Cycle Wisconsin

E-Cycle Wisconsin uses a product stewardship approach. Product stewardship means electronics manufacturers are responsible for the cost and proper recycling of covered electronics. It also means electronics retailers, collectors, recyclers, local governments and the DNR have responsibilities to ensure electronics are recycled properly. Wisconsin households, K-12 Public Schools and Milwaukee Parental Choice Program schools may recycle electronics through E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors and recyclers. Find a list of collection sites at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/ecyclewisconsin>

#### Electronics that can be recycled through E-Cycle Wisconsin

- Computers (desktop, laptop, netbooks and tablet computers)
- Desktop printers (including those that scan, fax and/or copy)
- Computer monitors
- Televisions
- DVD players, VCRs and DVRs
- Fax machines
- Computer mice and keyboards
- Other computer accessories such as hard drives, speakers, flash drives and modems

All of these devices, along with cell phones, are banned from Wisconsin landfills and incinerators as of Sept. 1, 2010.

### Why recycle electronics?

It is important to recycle electronics because of the valuable reusable materials they contain. These include plastics, metals, circuit boards and glass. Recycling or reusing these materials reduces environmental impacts and economic



Electronics recycled at a 2009 Milwaukee e-cycling collection event. Photo: courtesy of City of Milwaukee.

costs by reducing the need for virgin materials in new electronics and other products.

Many electronics also contain harmful materials. These include lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, other heavy metals and chemical flame retardants. When landfilled, incinerated or illegally dumped, these can leach into the environment, where they may affect human and environmental health.

Improperly handled discarded electronics may also pose health risks to workers from companies that manage the electronics.

### Have questions?

Call or e-mail us at (608) 266-2111 or [DNRWae-cycling@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWae-cycling@wisconsin.gov) for further information.

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